

NAME

Brenzel-Raymond-Interview I Side side A.mp3

DATE

October 6, 2026

DURATION

31m 11s

2 SPEAKERS

Roger Leonard

Raymond Brenzel

START OF TRANSCRIPT

[00:00:01] Roger Leonard

This is Roger Leonard. I am talking to Raymond Brenzel. On March 7th, 1984. Raymond, when did your family first come to Red hook?

[00:00:12] Raymond Brenzel

You have to. 18991898.

[00:00:16] Roger Leonard

Oh. Where did they come from?

[00:00:18] Raymond Brenzel

My father and mother both came from the town of Gallatin. That's above Jackson. Corners up in with my mother was. My mother lived there on a farm there. And my father's father had a farm just adjoining it, back a few more miles in the country. And they, they both lived there and they, they were married there and in Elizaville Methodist Church. And then they moved up Red hook to live, and they lived in. When they first came to operate, they lived in the in the part of the house with Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Boyce. That's the house where the Hagens lived.

[00:01:05] Roger Leonard

Oh. Right across from the sage house there.

[00:01:08] Raymond Brenzel

Only that wasn't the original house that I was born in. The original house burned. The Boyce's house burned in 191907. And then they rebuilt. And this house that's there now was the one they rebuilt. And they lived there for about a year and a half. I think so. In fact, I was born there in Mrs. Boyce's house. And then a couple of years afterward, then father bought the house up in the village there, across from well, next door to where Mrs. McCann owned the house on the hill.

[00:01:47] Roger Leonard

The little house where there's a big tree in the front yard.

[00:01:49] Raymond Brenzel

Yeah, that's where that's where we lived for 17 years. Family and six children were all born there. And. Then in 17, the family got too big for. For that little house with six children and my father and mother. And then part of the time my father had a man helping him in the shop and blacksmith shop, and who used to board him part of the time. And so, so then my father sold the house there and bought this house on West Market Street, where Lawyer Wicks lives now.

[00:02:27] Roger Leonard

Yes. Now, tell me about your father's blacksmith shop in upper Red hook first.

[00:02:34] Raymond Brenzel

Well, it's right across from How will I explain it? Do you were you here when Evelyn Hefferman lived in upper Red hook? No, no.

[00:02:47] Roger Leonard

It was was.

[00:02:47] Raymond Brenzel

You know where you know where Now, what was their name? Well, there's a house there. Next. Next south of Mrs. Cook's.

[00:03:01] Roger Leonard

Yes.

[00:03:02] Raymond Brenzel

This closed up most of the time. That was known as the heirs property. Mr. and Mrs. Heirs, my brother's blacksmith shop was right across the road from that.

[00:03:11] Roger Leonard

I see.

[00:03:11] Raymond Brenzel

And there's a house built there now. Evelyn Hefferman married Jack Hefferman. They built the house. Their father's shop was torn down and the house was built. He he he ran a blacksmith shop there for, well, I say about 1900. Well, yes, they moved upward in 89 and he lived. He ran the shop until, oh I would think possibly till C 17, probably to around 25, 1925 when he gave up the blacksmith business. And of course he had already moved to Red hook and then he would become interested in politics. He got in the post appointed postmaster for Oh, I don't know, 4 or 5 years.

[00:04:04] Roger Leonard

Oh, yeah.

[00:04:05] Raymond Brenzel

And then he got more further in politics and got elected town superintendent of highways in the town of Red hook.

[00:04:12] Roger Leonard

Oh.

[00:04:12] Raymond Brenzel

Did he? A few years. And then, of course, he had to give that up after a while. He got sick.

[00:04:21] Raymond Brenzel

And

[00:04:23] Roger Leonard

Well, what sort of things can you remember? Do you have any memories of anything that happened around the blacksmith shop that. That would be interesting to tell.

[00:04:32] Raymond Brenzel

Well, I, I got a picture here. I'll show you afterward of my father shoeing a horse in front of the blacksmith shop. And the man holding the horse, his name was Elmer Teeter, who lived up at town Spring Lake. And I am a little rascal about that high. Standing in front of the. My father's toolbox in the shop. And that picture now has been enlarged to that size and hangs in the Red hook in.

[00:05:13] Roger Leonard

Yes, I've seen it there.

[00:05:14] Raymond Brenzel

You have.

[00:05:14] Roger Leonard

Seen it? Yes.

[00:05:15] Raymond Brenzel

And I was quite surprised when that happened. Yeah. Because that came through. Clara Locy. Yeah. See my pictures here? Clara had a lot of my pictures at the time that the Hardscrabble day was organized here.

[00:05:30] Raymond Brenzel

And John reproduced a lot of them.

[00:05:34] Roger Leonard

Yeah.

[00:05:34] Raymond Brenzel

And gave me back my originals, but he kept a lot of it. And it was through Clara that when these people were bought, the hotel or the inn they wanted old pictures of villages and towns and places. So they got in contact with Clara somehow, and she gave him the picture of my father, and they had it reproduced in that big picture.

[00:06:01] Roger Leonard

So that was Elmer's horse.

[00:06:04] Raymond Brenzel

That was Elmer Tita's horse. The horse's name was June.

[00:06:08] Roger Leonard

Oh, yeah.

[00:06:10] Raymond Brenzel

Elmer. It was. It was a relative of Russell Clum. I just can't tell you how related. But he was a distant relative of Russell.

[00:06:20] Roger Leonard

Well, what sort of things happened in upper Red hook when you lived there, or was it a very uneventful place to live?

[00:06:27] Raymond Brenzel

Well, my father had the blacksmith shop and a man of Peter. Philip. Peter was a wagon maker, carpenter, wagon maker, and he had part of the south end of the shop, and he made wagons, repaired wagons and made wagons and wheels. And my father did the ironwork on the wagons.

[00:06:54] Roger Leonard

Oh, I see.

[00:06:55] Raymond Brenzel

And a man by the name of George Moss, who was Earl Clark? Reverend Earl Clark's wife's father. He was a painter.

[00:07:06] Raymond Brenzel

And, Mr. Moss, the wagons were made and ironed off and taken upstairs over the blacksmith's shop. Carpenter's shop. And Mr. Moss painted and finished them.

[00:07:17] Roger Leonard

Oh, I see. So how did they get the wagons up there? Was there a ramp?

[00:07:22] Raymond Brenzel

They had a ramp. Long ramp from the. Went up all the way up to a platform, and it took them right inside. We opened the door and wheeled them right in. They had a closed in room up there, which they did their varnishing and painting in so they wouldn't get any dust in them or anything. Yeah. Well, Mr. Teeter was a nice old gentleman. They belonged to our church, of course, and Miss Evelina Teeter, who was there. Their daughter. Fanny lived in Rhinebeck for quite a few years before she passed away. After the Down the street a little further. Well, next, next to where Mr. Teeter lived with the family of John Pitcher and his wife, Ida. They took some of orders from New York people. And an interesting fact was that one of their borders for a number of years was a Mr. and Mrs. Hoyt from New York. And they had a son, Waite Hoyt. Did you ever hear of Waite Hoyt, the famous pitcher of.

[00:08:36] Roger Leonard

No.

[00:08:36] Raymond Brenzel

Of the Yankee ball team. Oh, well, he. Wait. I knew Waite, of course, as a boy, and he was. I used to see him and his father stand out there in the summertime on the lawn, pitching ball back and forth.

[00:08:50] Roger Leonard

Is that.

[00:08:50] Raymond Brenzel

Right? And he became one of the noted pitchers of the Yankee Ball team. And I, I was interested at that time. I was interested in, in the in the Yankee ball team because new weight so. Well. Yeah. But of course weight retired, of course. And since that he died, he died down in New York.

[00:09:11] Roger Leonard

Now what years were he was he on the team? What years was he on the Yankees? What when when was he on the ball team?

[00:09:21] Raymond Brenzel

Oh, that must have been 19, 25, 30, 35. Somewhere along there.

[00:09:28] Roger Leonard

Yeah.

[00:09:29] Raymond Brenzel

Because I was Well, he was, I would say he was about my age, but of course he had. And then at that time, he was only probably in his early teens. So that it was a while before he got to be baseball pitcher. I suppose that he was up in Hyde Park. I think it was Hyde Park. Here a few years ago. I don't know what his errand was there, but he and a few other men were there. I would have liked to have gone down to see him, but I didn't know where he was, whether I should interfere with what they were doing down there or not. So since that I heard, he passed away. Old Mr. Curly. Ned curly, who always called him James curly was his name. He lived in the house where Edith Michael lives now. He was a painter and a nice old gentleman. He lived there most, most of the time by himself. He was married, but his wife spent most of her life in the city. She didn't like the country, and she used to come up weekends occasionally. And in the summer, she used to come up and stay for a few weeks at a time. That, and of course, the old Mr. and Mrs. Boyce were where the Hagens finally bought the place, the house that I was born in. They. She always called me her second son because I was born there in her house. Yeah. And they had a farm, and their farm was up where Sidney Mead owns now.

[00:11:05] Roger Leonard

Oh I see.

[00:11:06] Raymond Brenzel

They had a son who was married. His son lived up on the farm.

[00:11:10] Roger Leonard

Up on.

[00:11:10] Raymond Brenzel

Westfall. Their mother lived down in the village.

[00:11:13] Raymond Brenzel

And, of course, the father went up to the farm every, every day to work up there. And they grew apples and so forth. Same thing. And you come on down the next house where I Oh, man. Mr. and Mrs. Warehouse lived there. Warehouse and in the house with Mr. and Mrs. warehouse was the old gentleman by the name of Sandy Fulton. Kind of an old timer. And he carried mail with a horse and wagon from Coker Town Station down to upright Oak Post office. For a long time I can remember him seeing him over there when I used to be a long time for Mrs. Boyce, and I always went across the yard to see Sandy, you know, the old man. And of course, the hotel that's changed hands a great many times now. The only one I remember. Well, I don't remember him particularly was gracious father owned the hotel at that time, Martin Lasher, his name was. And that has changed house changed hands for a number of times since that date. Many times. And it's now the antique shop, I guess. More or less.

[00:12:34] Roger Leonard

Yeah.

[00:12:35] Raymond Brenzel

Inside and outside.

[00:12:36] Roger Leonard

Yeah.

[00:12:38] Raymond Brenzel

Outside. They've been looking terrible for a long time. Well, of course, next door. Then, of course, in 1925, I lived in Upper Duke until I was 17. And then my father bought in Red hook. And then, of course, I came down here to live until 25, 19, 25. I married Grace. And when I went back up to live again. And then I lived there in that house for 50 years.

[00:13:08] Roger Leonard

50 years.

[00:13:10] Raymond Brenzel

Grace died in September of 74, and I stayed there until June of 75. And then I got out and sold out and so forth. The next door to us was Mr. and Mrs. Charles Plumb, Charlie and Lula Clum. I can't say anything particularly about him. They were just. He had a little place there and worked as himself. Of course, across the street was Doctor Harvey. Lucy's Place, John and Laura and Lawrence, Lucy's father. And then their father was old Doctor John Lucy. He lived in the same brick house, and he had two sons, Doctor Harvey and Doctor Edwin. They both became doctors.

[00:13:56] Roger Leonard

Yeah.

[00:13:57] Raymond Brenzel

And they stayed right in upright hook. Doctor Harvey lived in the brick house. And Doctor Ed built a house down the street where the gymnasts live now. And they doctored there for a long time until they passed out one after the other.

[00:14:13] Roger Leonard

Yeah.

[00:14:14] Raymond Brenzel

And. Doctor Harvey, doctor John, Lucy's wife. Was a sister of. I think I'm right. Yes. It was a sister of Doctor George Knickerbocker. And William Knickerbocker. William Knickerbocker was Grace's first husband.

[00:14:37] Roger Leonard

Oh, yeah.

[00:14:37] Raymond Brenzel

And that was their homestead up on the hill there. And then their son George got a doctor and he went to New York and practiced down summers near New York. I know just where. So that was in the family for a great many years.

[00:14:53] Roger Leonard

Yes, it certainly was.

[00:14:55] Raymond Brenzel

And Doctor Harve had two boys, and Doctor Ed had two boys and a girl, and all four boys which were younger than I have all passed away.

[00:15:09] Roger Leonard

Yeah.

[00:15:10] Raymond Brenzel

Agnes. Doctor Ed's daughter Agnes lives in the state of Washington. Agnes Clark now. And they were all very devout members of our church, mostly family were very much so that way.

[00:15:28] Roger Leonard

Yeah. Now, explain those Knickerbocker names again so that I get that straight. Was that the Knickerbockers? Who was who in that family?

[00:15:39] Raymond Brenzel

Well, I don't know where the Knickerbockers. That is. Grace's husband was William Knickerbocker, and he had a son, a brother, George Knickerbocker, who was in New York. I don't know who their father and mother were.

[00:15:55] Roger Leonard

Oh, I see.

[00:15:57] Raymond Brenzel

But Mrs. O. Mrs. Doctor John Lewis's wife on the hill was a sister to the Knickerbocker.

[00:16:10] Roger Leonard

Now, moving on up the other direction, what was up next door to them? Well, going north on Spring Lake Road.

[00:16:18] Raymond Brenzel

Well Going north on the right hand side. The first house is where Lester Danley lived for years. You must remember Lester. Yes. Lester lived there for a long time. Well, he yes, he lived there a good while. And his father, George Donnelly, lived where Karen Roberts lives now. And, of course, when his father and mother died. Lester and his wife moved up in the father's house.

[00:16:51] Roger Leonard

Oh, yes.

[00:16:52] Raymond Brenzel

And they lived there. And Karen still lives there. And then across from there is a house on the hill there. There's where Mr. and Mrs. William Coon lived. Always called him Billy Coon and Sarah Mog. Her name was Sarah Margaret. They always called her Sarah Mog. And they lived there for quite a long time. And then go on past that is the old Gardner girls home. That's. I don't know who owns that. It's some New York people. But they don't live in it, only just summer home weekends And I don't know anything about them at all, but the home was originally owned by the Gardner family, which the father and mother, I don't know their father's name, but the girls had two daughters, Emma and Maud Gardner. And Emma Gardner ran a millinery shop in Red hook here for a great many years. And my mother used to go Emma Gardner made hats, of course, in them days, you know, right from scratch. And then my mother used to go across slots from the store down on where Viola Mandell lives. We used to go across slots up over the hill and come out by Donnelly's over to Mrs. Emma Gardner's house for mother to try on her hat and see if she liked it. Oh, yeah. I remember going over my mother over across there to get up there. Further than that.

[00:18:34] Roger Leonard

Was there a store next door there? Was there a store?

[00:18:39] Raymond Brenzel

There was a store between Viola's and the Episcopal Church.

[00:18:43] Roger Leonard

Oh, yes.

[00:18:44] Raymond Brenzel

And a man by the name of Williams. J. Williams owned the store for quite a long time. He had a son, William. You know Willard. Willard Williams. And he was my age. And they sold out, and they went to Germantown up on nine G. And, of course, the father and mother died as well. And I don't know whether Willard is alive or not. I haven't seen or heard anything from him quite a long time, but I have seen him at different times. And

[00:19:19] Roger Leonard

Well, what I was thinking of was just north of the Gardiner's. There's a barn and on some of the maps that shows as a store of some kind. Do you know if there was a store next door to the gardeners at any time? Or was that always a barn? As long as you can remember?

[00:19:33] Raymond Brenzel

Well, to my knowledge that only just the gardener's barn where they kept the horse and wagon and so forth.

[00:19:39] Roger Leonard

You don't recall it being any kind of shop tack shop.

[00:19:42] Raymond Brenzel

Across the street where that little, little shack is.

[00:19:46] Roger Leonard

Yeah.

[00:19:47] Raymond Brenzel

There was a. That was at one time George Morse's paint shop.

[00:19:56] Roger Leonard

Oh I see.

[00:19:57] Raymond Brenzel

Now, maybe that might be some reference to that as being not a store, but it was George Morse's paint shop.

[00:20:04] Roger Leonard

Yeah. Now, Clara. Clara Cookingham mentions a store down near the corner.

[00:20:10] Raymond Brenzel

Ahem. Where Well, where Doctor Harvey sees the brick house. Don white lives the next to that where the Moores live. Now, there's where. Where, Laura. Right. You remember Laura comes to church. Well, there's where Laura and her husband lived for a long time in that house and the house adjoining it, which which are close together was where Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Hamm lived. Yes. Clara Cookingham father and mother. And they had a store right next to the house, and he had a grocery store, and he had the postmastership there for quite a while.

[00:20:48] Roger Leonard

I see.

[00:20:49] Raymond Brenzel

And and that of course, after the, I think Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd bought it. And after they bought it, they tore the house, the store down entirely.

[00:20:59] Roger Leonard

Now, Clara mentioned something about William Jennings Bryan coming through town. Had you ever heard that story?

[00:21:06] Raymond Brenzel

No, I don't.

[00:21:07] Roger Leonard

She said he.

[00:21:08] Raymond Brenzel

Stopped the name. Of course I heard it, but I don't remember anything pertaining to that.

[00:21:13] Roger Leonard

Well, the story goes that he stopped in upper Red hook, and Clara said she wasn't there.

[00:21:18] Raymond Brenzel

He might have stopped at the hotel. Of course, I don't know. That hotel took years ago, back when Grace was a little child. Little girl was quite a place. That was for tourists. Oh, yeah. Grace's mother was quite a cook, and she used to. They used to keep people come along overnight and feed them and put them up and so forth. And then the barn down. What used to be was the red barn down the lane across. That was their stables where they kept the horses and wagons.

[00:21:57] Roger Leonard

What about where the keels lived now, is that the place you're talking about?

[00:22:00] Raymond Brenzel

Where Charles Keels lived was you know, that was the Charlie Plum place.

[00:22:07] Roger Leonard

And then on the other side.

[00:22:08] Raymond Brenzel

And the little house on the other side was owned years ago. Was owned by a couple of ladies by the name of Herman's Hermits sisters. And then then after they died, Grace's husband, William Knickerbocker, bought it, And then he rented it for a number of years to Mr. and Mrs. Schaffer. Peter Schaffer and his wife. Then Peter, Mrs. Peter died. Then Mrs. Schaffer left up, right up. Her daughter got married and went down and Clinton saw Point Road somewhere. They opened a little store and my mother went down there and lived with her. Of course, she's the daughter is still living, but the daughter, the mother's died.

[00:22:58] Roger Leonard

What can you tell me about Grace's family, the Lashers?

[00:23:03] Raymond Brenzel

Well, Grace's father, as I say, her father. Mother owned a hotel. I don't think they built a hotel. I think they bought it of somebody. And I say they took ran a hotel and a boarding house and so forth, and a very thing happened at the time, while Grace was a small girl. A family from. New Jersey. Well, maybe that'll come to me. Well, the aim of Mr. and Mrs. Heller. They had a large hardware store. Montclair, in Montclair, new Jersey. And back in, I don't know just where it was. It must have been in the around 1900 or something of that neighborhood. Mr. and Mrs. Heller and their daughter, Maude, drove horses and wagons from Montclair, new Jersey, to the. To the. Exposition, new York State Exposition in Buffalo.

[00:24:21] Roger Leonard

Oh my gosh. That's quite a trip they did.

[00:24:24] Raymond Brenzel

And they came. Then of course, that was the old post road was through up right hook. Yeah. And of course they had to come in that way. So then they stopped and up the Red hook at the hotel, and they asked for rooms to stay all night. And they did. They put up there all night. And then the next morning they left. Well, this, their daughter Maude, was a small girl and Grace was a small girl. And they struck up a mutual friendship. Those two girls. Which lasted way up until here. Oh, 19. 50. Maybe 55.

[00:25:04] Roger Leonard

Is that right?

[00:25:05] Raymond Brenzel

And they, grace went down there to visit Maude when she was a little girl. And when she got older, she did. And Maude came up to visit Grace. And when they each were married, they stood up with each other.

[00:25:19] Roger Leonard

And that, right? Isn't that.

[00:25:21] Raymond Brenzel

Something? Visited back and forth to new Jersey a lot. And then, of course, when Grace and I got married, why, we used to go down to new Jersey twice a year to visit them, and they come up to our house about twice a year to spend a weekend with us. Yeah. Grace had a sister, Margaret, who married a man by the name of Fred Moore in Red hook. Yeah. And they lived down where? That little house. That house across from my sister Mildred that stands vacant. You ever seen that house stand there going to pieces? Well, that's where Grace's sister lived. And. And that was. Well, she. Yes. Grace's sister died there, and then they. Fred Moore sold it and he bought something up the street further. I don't just remember where. That's about all I know about Grace's family. She. There's only two of them, Grace and Maggie. Margaret. They called her Maggie and the two girls.

[00:26:30] Roger Leonard

Tell me about the Mooney house.

[00:26:33] Raymond Brenzel

The Mooney house? As I can remember, I can't remember, Mr. Mooney. No, I don't I don't know his death, I don't remember. It's on that window up in the church.

[00:26:46] Roger Leonard

Yeah.

[00:26:46] Raymond Brenzel

And Mr. Mooney came to Red hook, and I don't know whether he built that house or not, but he bought it. And he came to our church for a few years, and then he he was Episcopal minister, and then he decided that he was going to start a little Episcopal church in upgrade hook. So they built that little church. And when he left, I don't know whether when he left the church or whether it was after his death. I forgot that they put that memorial window into our church in his memory. He was there, and I'll never forget that. I've been told that when that window was put in, it was made in New York and shipped up by a boat to Barrytown, and a man by the name of Irving Doyle, who had a livery stable in Red hook and horses, of course, and he went to Barrytown. He was in the wintertime with a big sleigh, with straw in the sleigh, and put that window on and brought it up and took it to a Red hook to be installed in the church.

[00:27:58] Roger Leonard

Is that right?

[00:27:59] Raymond Brenzel

Now, who installed it? That I don't remember. Of course, who the carpenters were. I wouldn't be surprised if it might have been the man by the name of Philip Clum, who was a carpenter for years, and he lived up in the Claremont.

[00:28:17] Raymond Brenzel

You remember when you leave Claremont Village, you know where to stay? Yes. Well, as you get there, there's a fork in the road. That brick house right there on the point. Well, that's where Mrs. Clum lived for a great many years.

[00:28:30] Roger Leonard

Related to Russell.

[00:28:31] Raymond Brenzel

I presume so. I don't know, just the relationship or how close, but I'm sure it was some relation.

[00:28:40] Roger Leonard

Yeah. Did you know very many people who went to the church there? The Episcopal church. What do they call it? All saints.

[00:28:47] Raymond Brenzel

They never had too much of a congregation, I don't think ever. Although they they done pretty well for quite a few years. And the only ones I remember living in the, in the, in the house there was I remember faintly, Mrs. Mooney because she lived quite a few years after he died, and then a friend of Mrs. Mooney's by the name of Miss Russell. Miss Russell lived in the summers in the city, and she came up. It was a close friend of Mrs. Mooney, and she came up and lived with Mrs. Mooney there for as long as she lived. And then Mrs. Mooney died, and then Mrs. Russell stayed there for years and years. Never married. Single lady. Lovely, lovely old lady and a regular saint, as far as that's concerned. Lovely. And she ran the Episcopal Church there for a great many years, and then she. I remember so well that we used to have. In the summer we used to call them lawn parties. Well, they call theirs the Orchard Party, and it was always held in the orchard back of the church, and the, the Wheeler Hall, which was back of it. It was held in that orchard, and people. Some people would go up the hill that way to the. And then a lot of them would come up on Spring Lake Road by Miss Mooney's. Miss Russell's house, and there was a road laid up that way to it, and we always had. Wonderful times there in the Orchard party. Nice refreshments, ice cream and soda, and so forth, and. That that house where Miss Mooney lived, Miss Russell was really I don't know the age of it, but it was one of the older houses in Red hook, and that house was the old architecture of that house was spoiled when when a lady by the name of Mrs. Chisholm bought the house. Antique lady from city somewhere, and she tore the porch off of it. Have you ever seen a picture of the house with the porch on it?

[00:31:02] Roger Leonard

Yes.

[00:31:03] Raymond Brenzel

All across the front and way, all around the side. And she. It needed a lot of repair.

END OF TRANSCRIPT



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